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SECRETARY UDALL APPROVES CHANGES FOR PREDATOR AND RODENT CONTROL WORK

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall announced today he has accepted the report of his Advisory Committee on Wildlife Management on predator and rodent control as a general guidepost for Department policy concerning this activity in the future.

Recommendations of the so-called "Leopold Report" last year called for a reassessment of the purposes and functions of predator and rodent control in the light of changing land uses and public attitudes toward wildlife.

Among specific recommendations were that control of "pest" animals be kept to the absolute minimum needed to protect other resources and human health, that more explicit guidelines be set up to administer animal damage control, and that there be increased research to find more specific controls for pest species.

The Advisory Committee, headed by Dr. A. Starker Leopold of the University of California, Berkeley, also called for proper scientific management of all wildlife resources with a view to the total public interest and welfare.

Other members of the study committee were Dr. Ira N. Gabrielson, President, Wildlife Management Institute; Dr. Clarence Cottam, Director, Welder Wildlife Foundation; Thomas L. Kimball, Executive Director, National Wildlife Federation; and Dr. Stanley A. Cain, now Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

Secretary Udall said changes to be carried out under this policy will be administered by a newly created Division of Wildlife Services which in July will replace the Division of Predator and Rodent Control in the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife.

Secretary Udall said the Department is not planning any abrupt program changes which would create a void in needed pest control.

"We have no intention of abandoning our responsibility in the control of damage by pest species when it is clear that Department's assistance is needed," Secretary Udall said. "At the same time, the Department has a much wider interest in wildlife, including the general public interest and the special interest in rare and endangered species.

"The problems of today must be met with an ecological approach based upon the husbandry of all wildlife. This includes even those species which, at certain times and places, are either misplaced by land use or are concentrated in such numbers as to be regarded as pests."

Secretary Udall said the Department will insist that all damage-control efforts in which it participates be effective, efficient, and the minimum required to meet demonstrated needs. He said there will be increased emphasis on both research and the gathering of data on pest damage.

Secretary Udall said historically, Federal financial participation in control of animal damage has been less than half of the total paid by all of the participating agencies. He noted that the Department now has responsibilities for coordinating and supervising what is in effect a local-State-Federal program, and he said it is important to the general public interest that the Federal Government retain these responsibilities.

Secretary Udall said changes under the new policy will be announced as they are made.

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